

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Virginia*

*World Trade Center 757/441-6331
Suite 8000, 101 West Main Street
Norfolk, VA. 23510*

NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2003**

**For Further Information Contact:
Deanna Warren 757-441-6331**

Norfolk, Virginia – Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Dalma “Mike” Edwards, age 44, formerly of Hampton, VA, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Robert G. Doumar to 78 months of imprisonment in conjunction with his money laundering and theft of \$679,700 in monies belonging to the United States Postal Service.

Edwards appeared before the Court following his extradition from New Zealand. On November 19, 2002, Edwards pled guilty to theft of government property and money laundering.

Edwards served as president of Air Atlantic Express, a Virginia company in the business of providing air freight transportation services. In October 2000 the Postal Service briefly contracted with Air Atlantic Express for air freight services, but then terminated the contract in November 2000 when Edwards advised that his company was unable to perform. In January 2001 the Postal Service mistakenly issued a \$679,700 payment to Air Atlantic Express, notwithstanding that the company was not entitled to any payments. After discovering the error, Postal Service personnel notified Edwards of the mistake and demanded the immediate return of the funds. Rather than doing this, Edwards stole the \$679,700, schemed to deceive and to defraud the USPS by means of false statements and representations indicating he would repay the funds, and then wired most of the stolen money to a New Zealand bank account and left the United States.

In June 2001 Edwards was arrested in New Zealand. After Edwards’ indictment, the United States formally requested that New Zealand extradite him to the United States for prosecution. In September 2002, after a series of New Zealand judicial proceedings over a fifteen-month period, New Zealand’s Minister of Justice, Phil Goff, ordered Dalma Edwards surrendered to the United States.

U.S. Attorney McNulty said: “Edwards attempted to escape justice by fleeing halfway around the world. This case demonstrates our resolve to bring all fugitives to justice.”

The investigation was conducted by the United States Postal Service, Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Robert J. Krask prosecuted the case.

###